

**TESTIMONY OF PERISH REID OF INDEPENDENCE UNLIMITED  
IN SUPPORT OF FUNDING FOR THE  
CONNECTICUT FAIR HOUSING CENTER**

Senator Harp, Representative Walker, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify this evening. My name is Perish Reid and I am one of four transition coordinators for Independence Unlimited, Inc. (IU) a non-residential, non-profit center for independent living that serves very diverse populations in 38 cities and towns in mainly Hartford County. I am here today to thank you for funding the Connecticut Fair Housing Center in the past and to urge you to continue funding them.

I am one of 28 Transition Coordinators that work with the Money Follows the Person program to transition people from nursing homes into the community of their choice. The counsel of the Connecticut Fair Housing Center is invaluable in assisting us in meeting the goals of the Money Follows the Person program. Too often when I look for housing for people transitioning from nursing homes to the community my inquiries are met with denials. I have been told that landlords do not want someone with a disability or do not want to take someone who has a rental assistance subsidy or do not want to let tenants make changes to apartments to make them more accessible. The Connecticut Fair Housing Center has been instrumental in helping us overcome all of these obstacles.

In one case on which the Center and I are currently working, I am helping one of my clients find housing so that she could move out of a nursing home. I found an apartment in Manchester I thought would be perfect because it met her needs for an accessible unit. Unfortunately, I was told that my client did not make enough money to qualify. I explained that my client would only be paying 30% of her income for rent and that she had a rental assistance

voucher to pay the balance. I was still told that my client did not qualify. I called the Connecticut Fair Housing Center to ask if this was legal. I was told that landlords were not permitted to refuse to accept rental assistance vouchers. The Center is now representing my agency and my client in a case against the landlord asking that the landlord stop discriminating against people like my client who can afford to pay the rent with the help of a rental assistance voucher. Unfortunately, my client has had to be moved to an apartment that is not fully accessible while the Center continues this fight. This has been a difficult move for her. However, I am hopeful that she and others like her will be able to move into the housing of their choice more quickly as a result of this lawsuit.

My agency has agreed to be a part of this lawsuit because too many landlords refuse to rent to people who are leaving nursing homes. Such refusals, in addition to being illegal, also make it difficult for Independence Unlimited to fulfill its obligations under the Money Follows the Person Program. I know that the Governor's budget projects additional cost savings to Connecticut by moving more people from expensive nursing homes into less expensive and more appropriate community living situations. However, without organizations like mine and the Connecticut Fair Housing Center working together on this initiative, that goal will be difficult to achieve. I urge you to continue funding the Connecticut Fair Housing Center.